

Miami “Farmworker Fiestas”

Jerry Brown writes: Juanita (Brown) and I organized two “Farmworker Fiestas” in Miami which (to the best of my memory) took place two successive years, in spring of 1974 and 1975 (or possibly 1973 and 1974). Cesar Chavez and Jim Drake, plus several others farmworkers who traveled with Cesar, attended both of them and, of course, Cesar, was the featured speaker.

The first one took place at the Catholic Carrolton School in Coconut Grove and was highly successful attracting 3000 – 5000 people, so we decided to repeat it the following year on Watson Island near downtown Miami, where over 10,000 people attended. The purpose of the events was to raise awareness, support the boycott (was it Gallo or lettuce in those years? – I don’t recall) and raise money. All of the proceeds went to the UFW and I believe we raised over \$30,000 at the second event. It was an exciting time for all involved and we generated lots of support for La Causa.

Juanita’s mom, Millie Cowan, and her circle of liberal political friends were instrumental in opening all of the doors to the city, including police cooperation and the endorsement by then Major of Miami, Maurice Ferre. Juanita and I put together a core group of active volunteers which met Sundays at our cottage to plan the event over bagels, tea and coffee.

The music was all provided free by a new non-profit called PACE (Performing Artists for Community and Education, organized by Rod Glaubman with the support of Robert Dulberg) and all the musicians donated their time, as did everyone who was involved with putting on the event. I have zero recollection of the names of the bands that played at these events, but there were several great performances.

The night before the second Fiesta, a big whig cocktail party was held at the home of Talbot “Sandy” D’alemberte, a prominent attorney, who went on to become the president of the American Bar Association, and later, the President of Florida State University, a post from which he retired several years ago.

Que Viva la Causa en la Historia, Jerry